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CHEROKEE - FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, IS, US

SUBJECT: THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH DINITZ, FRIDAY,
MARCH 5, 1976

1. SUMMARY: THE SECRETARY RECEIVED AMBASSADOR DINITZ AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST FOR AN HOUR-AND-A-HALF MEETING ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON, MARCH 5, 1976. THE PRINCIPAL TOPIC WAS THE GOI'S REACTION TO THE US DECISION TO START CONSULTATIONS WITH CONGRESS ON MILITARY SUPPLIES TO EGYPT. DINITZ ALSO RAISED SADAT'S STATEMENTS IN THE PRESS OF "SECRET US ASSURANCES" TO HIM, AND THE ASSERTIONS IN THE SHEEHAN ARTICLE THAT PRESIDENTS NIXON AND FORD COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO THE 1967 FRONTIERS. END SUMMARY.

2. ARMS TO EGYPT: DINITZ READ AN ORAL MESSAGE "STRONGLY AND CATEGORICALLY" OBJECTING TO THE SUPPLY OF ARMS TO A COUNTRY IN A STATE OF WAR WITH ISRAEL. SALE OF THE C-130'S WOULD AUGMENT THEIR MILITARY SUPPLIES, INCREASE THE DANGER OF WAR, AND, TOGETHER WITH SOVIET AND EUROPEAN ARMS SALES
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TO OTHER ARABS, INCREASE THE MILITARY POTENTIAL OF THE

ARABS. THE SECRETARY HAD INFORMED THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE SALE OF SIX C-130'S AND SAID THAT THE US DOES NOT CONTEMPLATE ADDITIONAL ITEMS. BUT THE PRESENT DECISION,

AS CONVEYED BY MR. SISCO ON MARCH 1, TO CONSULT WITH CONGRESS ABOUT ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES OF ITEMS IS REGARDED IN ISRAEL AS A BASIC CHANGE IN US POLICY. ISRAEL UNDERSTOOD AND HELPED IN THE US POLICY OF IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH EGYPT. BUT TO BEGIN A MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP IS SEEN AS A "DANGEROUS COURSE OF ACTION."

3. DINITZ ALSO CITED REPORTS OF REMARKS BY SECRETARY RUMSFELD AND DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS AS INDICATING A USG COMMITMENT TO BEGIN A LONG-TERM MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT, UP TO AND INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF F-5'S. ISRAEL HAD TO KNOW WHAT IT WAS FACING. DINITZ HINTED THAT ISRAEL WOULD HAVE TO OBJECT TO THE C-130'S IF IT WAS RELATED TO ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP, BECAUSE ONCE A PRECEDENT WAS SET, ISRAEL WOULD FIND IT HARDER TO ARGUE IN THE FUTURE AGAINST FUTURE ITEMS. ISRAEL COULD ONLY CONCLUDE THAT THIS WAS THE INTENTION BEHIND SEEKING THE C-130'S FROM CONGRESS SINCE THE C-130'S COULD HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY COMMERCIAL SALE. THE ADMINISTRATION BRIEFINGS OF CONGRESS WERE IN BROADER TERMS THAN C-130'S ALONE.

4. THE SECRETARY REPLIED THAT THE LETTER OF OFFER, WHICH HAD NOT YET BEEN SUBMITTED, WOULD BE FOR C-130'S ALONE. WE HAD APPROACHED THE CONGRESS DIRECTLY AND OPENLY BECAUSE WE DID NOT WANT TO REPEAT THE EXPERIENCE OF THE JORDANIAN HAWKS. THE SECRETARY HAD ALWAYS TOLD THE ISRAELIS THAT IF WE SOUGHT TO SELL MILITARY ITEMS TO EGYPT WE WOULD DO IT OPENLY AND WITHOUT MANEUVERING. WE HAD PRESENTED LONG-RANGE CONCEPTUAL STUDIES TO THE CONGRESS SO THEY WOULD KNOW OUR THINKING; WE HAD TRIED TO LIST POSSIBLE CATEGORIES OF ITEMS THAT WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE MILITARY BALANCE. MR. SISCO POINTED OUT TO DINITZ THAT THE LIST OF CATEGORIES HAD BEEN MEANT TO BE REASSURING TO ISRAEL.

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5. NOTHING OTHER THAN C-130'S AND TRAINING HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE EGYPTIANS, THE SECRETARY CONTINUED. THE SUBMISSION TO THE CONGRESS WOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT THEIR APPROVAL OF THE C-130'S WOULD NOT BE TAKEN TO IMPLY APPROVAL OF ANY OTHER ITEM OR ANY MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH EGYPT. IF WE SEEK TO SUPPLY OTHER ITEMS, WE WILL OF COURSE HAVE TO GO BEFORE THE CONGRESS AGAIN WITH EACH INDIVIDUAL ITEM. WE COULD NOT, HOWEVER,

GIVE A BLANKET ASSURANCE THAT ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ELSE WOULD BE SUBMITTED THIS YEAR. BUT THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT, DISCUSSION, OR EXPLORATION NOW GOING ON WITH THE EGYPTIANS ON OTHER REQUESTS. NOTHING ELSE WAS CONTEMPLATED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. THE US WOULD TRY TO GIVE EGYPT THE IMPRESSION WE WERE OPENING UP A SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP, FOR EGYPTIAN INTERNAL PURPOSES, BUT ISRAEL WAS ESSENTIALLY FACING AN ISOLATED CASE (THE C-130'S).

6. THE SECRETARY EMPHASIZED THAT IF THE ISRAELIS TRIED TO BLOCK THE C-130'S, WE WOULD TAKE THEM ON. WE WOULD GO TO THE PUBLIC. WE HAD PROMISED THESE TO SADAT. THE CONGRESS ALWAYS HAD THE OPTION OF SAYING NO TO ADDITIONAL ITEMS. DINITZ SAID THAT HE WOULD REPORT ALL THIS FAITHFULLY. HE POINTED OUT THAT ISRAEL WAS REACTING TO WHAT IT HEARD FROM PRESS STORIES, RUMSFELD BRIEFINGS, AND CONGRESSIONAL SOURCES.

7. SADAT AND THE "SECRET US ASSURANCES": DINITZ REFERRED TO THE N.Y. TIMES STORY MARCH 3 OF THREE ALLEGED SECRET US ASSURANCES CITED BY SADAT. ONE WAS THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT ATTACK SYRIA. SECOND WAS THAT THE US WOULD DO ALL IT CAN TO ENSURE PLO PARTICIPATION. THIRD WAS THAT THE US WOULD WORK FOR A GOLAN NEGOTIATION. THE FIRST AND THIRD WERE NOTHING NEW. AS FOR THE SECOND, ON THE PLO, DINITZ HOPED HE COULD REFER THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT OF MARCH 4 TO THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE--THAT IT REMAINED THE US POSITION THAT THE PLO HAD FIRST TO ACCEPT 242 AND 338. THIS WOULD TAKE CARE OF IT. THE SECRETARY SAID CERTAINLY. HE COULD EVEN GO FURTHER AND ASSURE THE PRIME MINISTER THAT SADAT HAD NO BASIS FOR THE STATEMENT.

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8. SHEEHAN ARTICLE: DINITZ RAISED THE SHEEHAN ARTICLE AND ITS CLAIMS THAT NIXON AND THEN FORD ASSURED SADAT THAT THE US FAVORED A RETURN TO THE 1967 INTERNATIONAL BORDER. THE SECRETARY REPLIED THAT THE US POSITION WAS AS STATED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT THAT MORNING AND AS REITERATED ON COUNTLESS OCCASIONS IN PRIVATE COMMUNICATIONS WITH ISRAEL: THAT ACCORDING TO RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338, THE FINAL BORDERS ARE TO BE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN THE PARTIES. DINITZ SAID THAT WASHINGTON GOSSIP WAS THAT THE SECRETARY HAD LEAKED IT. THE SECRETARY CATEGORICALLY DENIED IT, ASKING WHY SHOULD HE LEAK SOMETHING THAT WAS AGAINST HIS OWN INTEREST. KISSINGER

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